

Sermon Recap
Summer Psalms 2024
Integrity and Truthfulness
Lesson 3 Psalm 15 Pt 2
081124

In our journey of faith, we often ponder how we can draw closer to God and experience a deeper relationship with Him. The wisdom found in Psalm 15 offers profound insights into this very question, presenting a roadmap for those seeking intimate fellowship with God.

The psalm begins with a poignant inquiry: "LORD, who may dwell in your sacred tent? Who may live on your holy mountain?" This question isn't about salvation or justification before God, but rather about sanctification - the ongoing process of becoming more like Christ in our daily lives.

At the heart of this pursuit lies the concept of integrity. The psalm describes the person who can dwell in God's presence as one "whose walk is blameless, who does what is righteous." This blamelessness doesn't imply perfection, but rather wholeness of character. Integrity, derived from the word "integer" meaning whole number, speaks to a consistency in godliness across all areas of life.

Imagine a person who maintains sexual purity but lacks kindness in the workplace, or someone generous with money yet struggling with lust. True integrity calls us to develop a character that is equally mature in all aspects, like a steel beam with evenly distributed alloys, strong enough to withstand pressure from any angle.

This integrity naturally flows into truthful speech, another key attribute highlighted in the psalm. In a world where truth seems increasingly elusive, where even "fact-checkers" can be unreliable, the call to speak "truth from the heart" stands out as a beacon of light.

The Bible paints a vivid picture of God as the ultimate source of truth. The Father is called the "God of truth" (Deuteronomy 32:4), Jesus declared Himself to be "the truth" (John 14:6), and the Holy Spirit is known as the

"Spirit of truth" (1 John 4:6). As bearers of God's image, we are called to reflect this attribute in our own lives.

But why is truthfulness so crucial? It's not merely about following a moral code or maintaining a good reputation. The deeper motivation stems from the gospel itself. Consider the pivotal moment when Jesus stood before Pilate, facing a life-or-death interrogation. When asked if He was a king, Jesus could have saved Himself by lying. Instead, He chose to speak the truth, knowing it would cost Him everything.

This profound act of truthfulness, which led to Christ's sacrificial death on the cross, becomes our ultimate inspiration for truthfulness. We tell the truth not because "honesty is the best policy" or because it benefits us, but because Christ's truthfulness cost Him everything for our sake.

The psalm goes on to describe other attributes that flow from this foundation of integrity and truthfulness: refraining from slander, doing no wrong to neighbors, keeping oaths even when it hurts, and maintaining ethical financial practices. These qualities paint a picture of a life wholly devoted to God, manifesting His character in every interaction and decision.

Again, it's important to note that this pursuit of godly character isn't about earning God's love or securing our salvation. Rather, it's a response to the grace we've already received. As the apostle Paul reminds us in Philippians 2:12-13, we are to "work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose."

This "working out" of our salvation involves intentional effort and even struggle. The writer of Hebrews speaks of resisting sin to the point of shedding blood, while Peter exhorts believers to "make every effort" to grow in godly qualities. Sanctification is not a passive process but an active partnership with the Holy Spirit.

As we reflect on these truths, we're challenged to examine our own lives. Are we pursuing integrity in all areas, or are there pockets of inconsistency in our character? Do we speak truth from the heart, even when it's costly or

uncomfortable? Are we allowing the gospel to transform not just our outward behavior, but our inward motivations?

The promise for those who embody these qualities is profound: "Whoever does these things will never be shaken" (Psalm 15:5). There's a stability and security that comes from aligning our lives with God's character and commands.

In a world of shifting values and subjective truths, the call to integrity and truthfulness stands as a timeless beacon. It's not an easy path, but it's one that leads to deeper fellowship with God. As we pursue these qualities, may we find ourselves drawing ever closer to the One who is the source of all truth and the perfect model of integrity.

Let us then, with grateful hearts for the grace we've received, strive to be people of integrity and truth. May our lives reflect the character of Christ, not to earn God's favor, but to experience the deep joy of intimate fellowship with Him. In doing so, we not only enrich our own spiritual lives but also shine as lights in a world desperately in need of authentic, God-centered living.

Small Group Discussion Questions

- 1 How does understanding the difference between justification and sanctification impact our daily walk with God and our pursuit of holiness?
- 2 The sermon mentions two "ditches" to avoid: emphasizing sanctification over justification, and emphasizing justification over sanctification. Which of these do you think is more common in today's church? Why?
- 3 Discuss the concept of integrity as "being the same throughout." Share an example of someone you know who demonstrates integrity. In what areas of your life do you find it challenging to maintain consistency?
- 4 The sermon states, "Every time a person speaks the truth or lies, they align themselves either with God or with Satan." How does this perspective impact your view on truthfulness?
- 5 Reflect on Jesus' example of telling the truth before Pilate, even at great personal cost. How does this inspire you to be more truthful?
- 6 In what ways does pursuing integrity and truthfulness impact our ability to have close fellowship with God, as described in Psalm 15?

